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ABSTRACT

Although over 40 percent of college students in southern states receive their bachelor's degrees in liberal arts fields, the demand for those graduates in the job market is increasing at a slow rate. Colleges and universities can assist students with career development, integrating career and liberal education. Several approaches are currently being pursued: (1) curricular revision, (2) separate courses in career education, and (3) strengthening career planning and advisement. Several institutions in the region are combining strategies. Three implications arise: (1) mere structural integration of liberal education and career development will not automatically result in a fusion of these elements, but must be supported by both student affairs and academic divisions of the institution; (2) the potentially strongest approach seems to be one in which there is such an integration in the form of a single faculty member; and (3) this integration is aided by faculty involvement, and such involvement probably has to be cultivated on a selective rather than comprehensive basis. (MSE)

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Faculty Involvement in Career and Academic Advisement

What are the responsibilities of colleges for the career needs of students? Students, parents, legislators, and institutions are seriously concerned about this question. Over 40 percent of the college students in the Southern region receive their bachelor's degree in one of the traditional liberal arts disciplines. However, the College Placement Council recently noted that the hiring of liberal arts graduates has dropped severely since the onset of the 1970's. While the Council predicts eight percent more liberal arts graduates from the class of 1977 will be hired than last year, this gain is small in light of large declines in recent years.

The particular situation of the liberal arts graduate was recognized in a Bureau of Labor Statistics study of college graduates who had completed their degrees in the year ending June, 1972 (Table 1). In October, 1972, 9.3 percent of the June graduates who were in the labor force or available for work were unemployed. However, social science and humanities majors had much higher rates of unemployment than business and education graduates. Furthermore, liberal arts students were much more likely to be employed in a job *not* related to their major.

Table 1

Employment Status of July 1971 To June 1972 Degree Recipients, United States

Major Field of Study	Percent Unemployed	Percent employed in job not related to field
Business or commerce	5.2	14.7
Education	7.6	1.4
Humanities	15.4	31.1
Social Sciences	18.0	28.9
All other fields	6.9	18.2
All Fields	9.3	18.6

Source: Adapted from Anne M. Young, "Labor Market Experience of Recent College Graduates," Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in *Monthly Labor Review*, October, 1974.

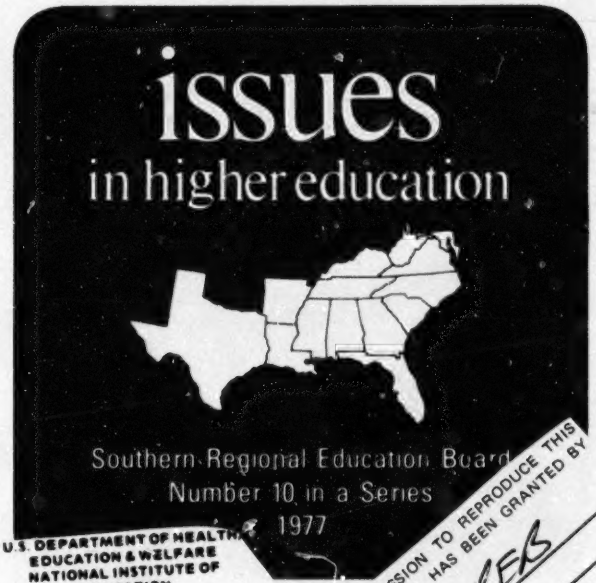
Two indisputable facts face college graduates seeking meaningful employment. First, the number of jobs in the professional-technical-managerial areas—the traditional job market for college graduates—is no longer growing at an increasing rate. Second, there are ever greater supplies of college graduates to fill these traditionally college-related jobs. In short, there are smaller increases in demand for and greater increases in the supply of college graduates.

Projections of the job market for college graduates affect students differently, depending on their area of study. When considering the traditional "college occupations" fields, an overall surplus is projected by 1980, but there will be deficits in specific occupations (Figure 1). Graduates of the liberal arts will confront a particularly tight market if the search for employment is confined to jobs directly related to their specific areas of preparation (Table 2).

Students are learning, more than ever, that the liberal arts degree is not a certificate to a specific job or occupation. More and more, they must consider alternatives to the jobs traditionally sought by liberal arts majors.

Liberal Education or Career Education?

In light of the tightening job picture for college graduates, what kind of education should be given a greater emphasis? Strong advocates of career education ask institutions to prepare students for specific job areas that show need for college graduates. The traditional educator, however, calls attention to the rapidly changing nature of the job market and stresses the importance of developing flexible skills that enable a graduate to adjust to a shifting employment structure. Proponents of liberal education point to studies which suggest that the worst career crisis of liberal arts graduates usually occurs in seeking a first job, and it is



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as careers progress that the advantages of liberal arts education become increasingly evident. Career education advocates emphasize earlier and clearer focusing on specific jobs. Advocates of liberal education claim it is impossible for colleges to provide career programs assuring larger numbers of students directly related jobs upon graduation.

The issue is not one of the either-or variety. The values of liberal education remain central to higher education as it has generally been perceived in America. But career preparation is as necessary in postsecondary education.

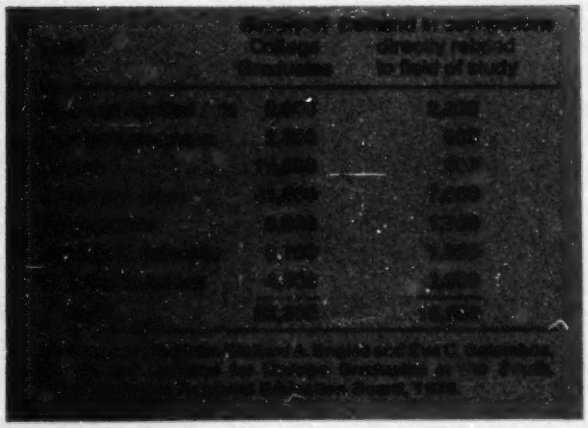
In adjusting to the tightening job market, colleges and universities can assist students in at least three ways:

1. Provide manpower information encouraging some students to shift toward fields that are projected to be in relatively short supply, which are often the so-called career fields;
2. Supplement liberal arts curricula with information about realistic career linkages or possibilities—
   —by encouraging enrollment in "tool courses" from the career-oriented disciplines, and
   —by providing specific information about possibilities in the job marketplace for a liberal arts graduate;
3. Strengthen career or vocational curricula with liberal arts content aimed at broadened understanding and increased flexibility in the job market.

Institutions are responding to the tightening job market with various activities. In some cases, they have embraced an almost completely vocational posture. In other instances, separation of liberal arts and career

Table 2

Comparison of Supply and Demand In the Liberal Arts Southern Region, 1980



education is maintained through distinct curricular tracks. In still other cases, the introduction of career-oriented courses into liberal arts curricula is being pursued. Can the issue be resolved by a realistic balancing of education for life and training for making a living? A number of institutions and leaders in the Southern region are attempting to resolve the liberal arts-career education issue through mutual accommodation.

Strategies for Accommodating Career and Liberal Education

Several approaches are being pursued to deliver career development services. Especially critical are the ways in which institutional responses may help to integrate career concerns into the total institutional structure, which more often than not is based in liberal education. Essentially, the approaches involve three kinds of strategies: (1) curricular revision, (2) separate curricular offerings, and (3) strengthened career planning and advisement. Although fairly new and not yet widely used, these approaches already have revealed both strengths and weaknesses as they have been applied by various colleges in the Southern region (Chart 1).

Curricular Revision

One option is to revise curricula toward the merger of the liberal arts with specific career concerns.

The basis for such curricular integration may come from faculty relating their disciplines to the practical problems involved in various occupations. By offering a career context to allow students to apply liberal arts concepts, faculty will have to define the knowledge and competencies needed by students in career application and then help students tie liberal education to career skills. Several curricular mechanisms offer promise in making the connection; cooperative education and internships, for example, provide firsthand experience for students.

At Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, student engineers pursue a science curriculum that is built on defining and solving actual technological problems of various business and social agencies, both public and private. Students are expected to apply their knowledge of the liberal arts as well as technological skills to the problem-solving process. In addition, each student is required to design a humanities project, which many relate to career goals.

Separate Courses In Career Education

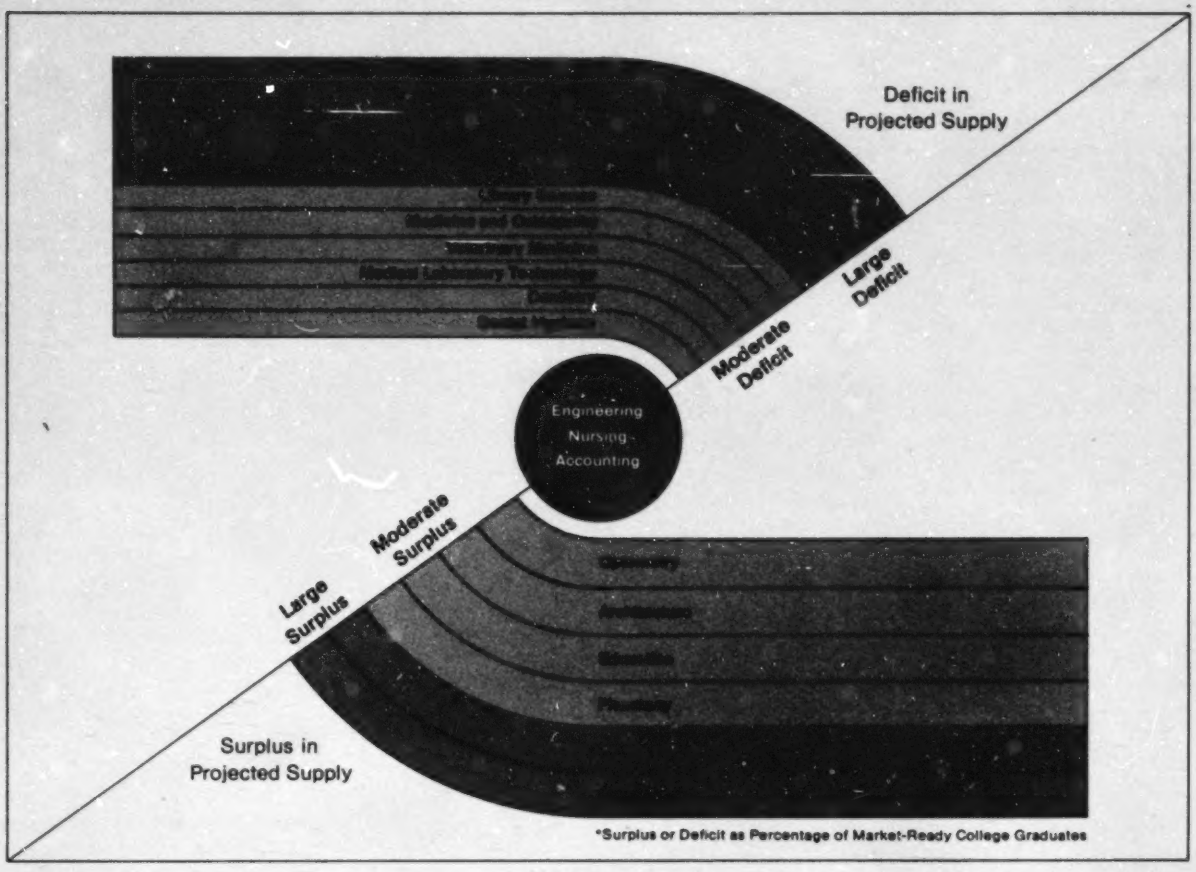
A number of institutions, including Georgia State University and Georgia Institute of Technology, offer career development courses, which are usually taken during student orientation or later in the freshman year. Georgia Tech offers a career course to juniors and seniors. The course content ranges from exploration of the student's own career interests and possibilities to studies of the occupational structure and how to prepare for specific jobs.

A more comprehensive curricular approach is the formation of "area minors." These areas allow liberal arts majors to take a parallel course of study that has more specific career applicability.

A special form of the course approach to merge career and liberal education is the recommendation that liberal arts majors develop some technical skills, taking

Figure 1

Supply Surplus or Deficit,* Selected Fields of Study, SREB Region, 1980



appropriate "tool courses" in subjects such as business, finance, data processing, and technical writing. The head of Eastman Kodak Company's Business and Technical Personnel office maintains that, unless they know some technical skills, even bright liberal arts graduates will have difficulty in finding jobs.

The course approach to resolving the liberal-career education issue also is being attempted in career-oriented programs. In these cases the aim is one of increasing the awareness of the liberal arts in career-oriented students. A fuller treatment of such "Career Education" was contained in the November, 1975 issue of SREB's *Regional Spotlight*.

Advisement

A third way that institutions are moving to integrate career development with academic education relies on strategies for improving the relationship between student academic and career advising. In its recent position statement on *Priorities for Postsecondary Education in the South*, SREB suggested that colleges strengthen counseling and guidance services to assist students in making effective curricular and career choices. While most institutions do have separate systems of academic and career advising, these have seldom been used to tie liberal and career education together. Several strategies are being tried in an effort to integrate these two through student advisement.

Most institutions divide the academic and career advising functions, with entirely distinct structures and personnel. At the University of South Florida, for example, academic and career advising are separate functions. Each of the eight colleges plus the Division of University Studies have an academic advising unit. Some are centralized units staffed by professional advisers. Some advisers have academic faculty backgrounds; others are grounded in counseling and guidance. In some schools, actual departmental teaching faculty advise students after they have declared a major.

Career advising is handled by a separate Counseling Center for Student Careers and Employment, which is staffed by professional career counselors. The success of this approach depends greatly on the effectiveness of the referral system operating between academic and career advising. Students may be referred by the academic adviser to the career counseling center, which feeds information back to the advising unit on the students' career plans and interests. The academic adviser then helps the students to select courses in line with the interests and abilities evidenced.

Other institutions are attempting to tie academic and career advising more closely together through involving faculty in both activities.

At Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, it is felt that students are better able to see the relationship of academic to career education if faculty advise students in both areas. Each department has at least one faculty member designated as an adviser for both career and academic concerns. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisers as early as possible. The combined approach to student advising continues throughout the student's four years and the involvement of faculty grows as the student progresses.

At the University of North Florida, the move toward integrating academic and career education involves both organizational and staffing changes. To furnish a structural basis for the combination of academic and career advising, the dean of students was designated as an academic dean to be involved fully in both the academic process and policy determination. Such a move provided one answer to the fractionalized advising services prevalent in most colleges which have counseling, placement, and financial aid programs lodged in student personnel units while instructional programs, cooperative education, and academic advisement are located in the academic sector.

To integrate academic and career advising even further, North Florida determined that faculty would serve in both the academic and career advisement functions. Selected faculty would advise on a half-time basis while maintaining ties with their discipline and department. The advising program would be directed by an associate dean of students who has significant input into the pay raises, promotions, and tenure for the advisers. Through its organizational and staffing patterns, the University of North Florida provides students with a single point of contact for both academic and career advising. Preliminary assessment by the vice president indicates that students value this way of combining liberal education and career development.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI) also mounted an effort to build a bridge between liberal arts and career education through faculty advisement. At VPI, specific departmental faculty in each department were named career advisers. The principal functions of the faculty career advisers, on whom the system focuses, are to provide career information to students and to other faculty, to coordinate academic advising with career planning, and to refer students to other sources of career information, such as the Placement Office, the Career Resources Center, and the Cooperative Education Office.

A Combined Strategy

Several institutions in the Southern region have formed strategies that use a combination of career course and advisement approaches.

In the November, 1975 *Regional Spotlight*, SREB reported on a unique career education project at the University of Alabama funded by the U.S. Office of Education. A major purpose of the program was to involve career development with academic concerns. A variety of strategies were used including special career courses, addition of career components to regular course offerings, and other activities designed to increase the awareness of faculty in career development.

Humanities faculty considered redefining the humanities in relation to students' personal and career development. A forum was held for both faculty and students to provide clear and concise concepts of career development in the liberal arts program.

In the sciences an effort was made to have more faculty understand the relationship between course work and career development by using outside speakers and having potential employers come on campus to conduct seminars for students.

Other approaches were used to link career and academic interests of students and faculty. The home economics department collected information on the careers of the home economics graduates of the past five years, and also established what jobs were available currently. Both faculty and students gained more realistic perspectives from these two exercises. The division of commerce and business administration extended its involvement in career development to include other student groups.

Complementing the academic and faculty involvement at Alabama were the Career Planning and Placement and the Counseling Centers. These areas contained the technical information and the professional counselors basic to career development. Efforts were made to deliver their services to students and faculty by going directly into the classroom and academic departments.

Although outside funding has terminated, the University of Alabama has indicated plans for continuing the overall project.

Implications

Institutional efforts highlight several implications of the attempts to integrate liberal education and career development. First, *mere structural integration will not automatically result in the fusion of career development and academic education.* At one university, although the career counseling center under student affairs was linked to the career programs in the academic affairs domain, the project director felt that the services of the counseling center suffered because of an "unwillingness of those in the center to encroach on the domain of the classroom." He saw the problem as a split between academic and student affairs. Apparently, the gap was wide enough so that more was needed for integrating the two areas than association with a mutual concept, such as career development. Also implied is the fact that career development is still a function associated with the student affairs side of an institution.

A second point is that *the potentially strongest approach seems to be one in which there is integration between the academic and career advising functions in the form of a single individual, a faculty member.* It has been observed that the key variable seems to be faculty involvement as a single point of contact in helping a

student to integrate liberal education and career development. The director of Student Academic Services at the University of Miami finds that a program aimed at integrating liberal and career education should have academic respect—and that usually translates into an academic basis. The coordinator of Academic Services at the University of Alabama, who is an instructor in biology, agrees that strong academic roots are needed.

A third implication is that *the integration of liberal arts and career education is aided by faculty involvement and that such involvement probably has to be cultivated on a selective, as opposed to a comprehensive, basis.* While infusion of career development into the liberal arts through the comprehensive education of all faculty is certainly an ultimate concern or goal, it may be more realistic to focus on those faculty members, perhaps one in each department, who are interested specifically and who have the personal characteristics that allow them to show students ways in which liberal arts and career education may be integrated.

Enhancing Faculty Involvement

Even attempts at structural integration that are academically or departmentally-based depend on the quality and intensity of faculty involvement. One relatively new factor that may help increase faculty involvement is the projected decline in enrollment. While in part attributable to the decline of the 18- to 24-year-old age group, the shrinking enrollment may also be related to perception of lower economic returns on college-going because of an unfavorable job market for college graduates. Interest of faculty in career advising has grown during the 1970's in the South. The coordinator of Academic Services at the University of Alabama, who has held that position since 1968, finds that students began a substantial shift to career-orientation in 1971-72 and that faculty interest in such changes began surfacing about 1974.

A major reason for supposing that faculty may engage in such efforts lies in the potential of career advising for increasing the attractiveness of investing in

Chart 1

Strategies for Increasing Career Consciousness

Strategies	Delivery	Problems	Advantages
Revise curricula to strengthen linkage between liberal arts and vocational programs	Through departmental agreements on electives, work-study, cooperative education, problem-solving and other action-oriented study such as policy analysis	Obtaining cooperation among disciplines and from faculty oriented toward traditional methods may be difficult, slow process	Strengthens liberal arts background for vocational program students and provides liberal arts students with "foot-in-the door" courses
Teach career development as a course	Credit course or Non-credit course	How many take it? When is it most effective—early or late in college experience?	May motivate the student to assess his career plans
Strengthen career planning and advisement			
Career development counselors have primary responsibility for career advising	Career development center or office is under Student Affairs division	Career counseling does not interface with daily academic experience of the student Many students never visit career planning center or counselors	Counselors have more up-to-date information on career opportunities and specialize in career planning
Faculty and career counselors have mutual responsibility—faculty emphasize academic options and links to careers; counselors focus on career planning, measurement and placement	Coordinated roles through Academic Affairs or Split roles with supervision of faculty by Academic Affairs and counselors by Student Affairs	Requires specific effort by someone to get this kind of coordination going—a difficult job when two roles are administered by separate deans	Combines specialized knowledge of career development counselors with day-to-day exposure of students to faculty
Faculty have primary responsibility for academic and career advising Diffused among all faculty Assigned to specific faculty	Informal process or, in some cases, More formal arrangements	Faculty do not have knowledge of variety of career opportunities in their own and other fields Student may be assigned adviser who is in different field from student's interest	There is more day-to-day interface between faculty and students than is possible in any other arrangement

liberal education. Faculty can rekindle interest in collegiate education and in the same process help enhance their own future in higher education. Representatives from several major institutions in the region, such as West Virginia University, the University of Alabama, and the University of Miami, indicate that faculty are more prone to view advising as a function that may aid their own professional development.

At West Virginia University, the assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who is also director of the Academic Advising Center, has noticed that faculty in the humanities and social sciences are leaders in the effort to articulate liberal and career education. This may be attributed to the relatively poor job market for humanities and social science majors and the possible enrollment loss in these areas. At West Virginia University, the philosophy department has embarked upon a serious effort to relate philosophy to career development. Other institutions in the region report that faculty are perceiving a very clear connection between career relevance and enrollment in their disciplines.

Summary

Institutions in the Southern region are dealing increasingly with the accommodation of career needs and traditional liberal education. Colleges are seeking approaches that will work toward integration of these approaches rather than radical shifts to one or the other orientation. Among the approaches to combining career and liberal education, reliance on some form of advisement is one of the most feasible. While the career consciousness of students can be served through specific courses that deal with the mechanics of career preparation and entrance, such career concerns may be addressed in other ways that will accommodate the benefits of a broader curriculum.

Reorganizing institutional structures to encourage closer cooperation among academic and student affairs divisions is one way that helps to merge what is valuable in career and liberal education. But the power of this approach really lies in the basis it provides for an institution to build an effective advising system. It is through some form of personal advising of students that integration is likely to occur.

Depending on its form, advising may foster the integration of career and liberal education by better coordination and clarification of the separate systems of academic and career advising, by placing responsibility for both kinds of advising in the same person, or by involving faculty in the process. From the experiences of several institutions in the South, it appears that a program of advising, which coordinates and makes visible the relationships of career to academic education and that guarantees some faculty contact or involvement with the student, offers a positive approach to resolving the issue of "career versus liberal education."

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